

Key Ideas from the Keys to Quality Accreditation Project



Key Idea Collaboration

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One of the primary goals of the Keys to Quality Accreditation Project is a collaboration among and between local school districts and community partners. The objective is for strong community partnerships to enhance program continuity for young children and families. In reaching this objective community partners and local school districts should be more successful in including children with special needs in their most natural and least restrictive environment. This natural environment would be the same setting, either a public or community based preschool/kindergarten, a child would attend if he or she did not have special needs.

Effective collaboration can be a difficult task. It often provides much time and commitment from both parties. However, reaching across lines to work together on a common vision truly supports and values young children and their families.

The following is list of some ideas that might help collaboration efforts or enhance ongoing collaboration events in your community:

- Collaborate together to create a common vision statement for both programs
- Develop a Collaboration Plan in the beginning of each school year. This plan might include a Task & Timeline where responsibilities are clearly delegated.
- Attend **KQ** workshops and other professional development trainings together.
- Include a representative from the Community Partner on the Elementary School's School Improvement Team (SIT)
- If a child with special needs is placed in a community-based preschool/kindergarten, be certain to involve his/her community preschool/kindergarten teacher in all Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings and Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings.
- Share and develop consistent curriculum and assessment tools among programs.
- Participate in cross visitations to each other's programs. (This can be done with children as part of a transition plan.)
- Organize a Pot Luck Dinner for staff and administration and families from both parties.

Keys to Quality (KQ) is a collaboration of the RI Department of Education, CHILDSPAN: RI's Child Development and Education Training System and RI Department of Human Services. It provides funding and technical assistance (TA) to support local school districts and early care and education programs

serving young children in pursuing Accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). For more information, contact the Keys to Quality Project by contacting RI Department of Education, Preschool Grant Coordinator, 401/222-4600 x 2408, email: abcohen@ride.ri.net or RI CHILDSPAN at 401/729-0765, email: childpan@childspan.net